DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 386 107 HE 028 515

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TITLE Studying Finance in Higher Education: Trends, Issues, and Practices of the Past Decade.
PUB DATE [95]
NOTE 14p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Content Analysis; *Educational Finance; *Educational Trends; Financial Support; Foreign Countries; *Higher Education; Income; *Postsecondary Education as a Field of Study; *Scholarly Journals; Trend Analysis; Tuition
IDENTIFIERS Financial Planning; United States

ABSTRACT

This study examined publication trends in periodicals related to the study of higher education, examining articles on educational finance in seven leading periodicals from 1982 through 1993. A total of 98 articles on educational finance were identified. The study found that 51 percent of the articles were written by faculty, and that 81 percent were practice-driven, focusing on processes and systems used to obtain additional institutional or system revenues or manage institutional funds. Topically, 32 percent of the articles dealt with international reports of financing higher education in particular countries, while 22 percent focused on institutional financial planning, 15 percent on tuition costs, 12 percent on funding sources, and 10 percent on the philosophy and history of finance in higher education. Alternative methods of revenue generation were largely ignored, indicating a reactive approach to problem identification and study. (Contains 11 references.) (MDM)

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ED 386 107

Studying Fina nce in Higher Education: Trends, Issues, and l Practices of the Past Decade

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Running Head: Litera ture on Higher Education Finance

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Abstract

As colleges and universities have confronted growing financial constraints throughout the past decade, the importance of studying the factors associated with higher education finance have increased dramatically. The current investigation studied the publication trends of the leading journals in the study of higher education. Study findings revealed that only half of all articles were written by faculty, and that the vast majority of publication related to finance was practice-driven. While no chronological-cycle or trend was found in publication dates, the topics of financial planning and revenue sources were common.

Higher education institutions have increasingly come to recognize the importance of finance. Concerns ranging from cut-back management strategies to budget evaluation and endowment management techniques have become common on virtually all college campuses (Gold, 1990).

Despite what some forecasted, higher education survived the financial constraints and cut-backs of the early 1980s. Throughout the past decade, however, higher education institutions and systems placed greater emphasis on alternative revenue sources, internal money-management processes, and debt management techniques (Mason & Alfano, 1986). Attention to budget evaluation systems, fund raising, endowment management, legislative relations, and audit processes have all been addressed by practitioners concerned with cash flow and institutional solvency.

During this same period of time, graduate programs which study higher education have recognized the changing world of finance, and have begun to offer additional course work in budgeting, financial management, management information systems, and institutional advancement. The literature base on which these programs draw and contribute, however, has proven to be linear in its progression. Practitioners and scholars alike have called for greater scholarly attention to financing higher education, a call which has been answered by some (Paulsen, 1991), yet not fully embraced by the community of scholars

studying higher education. Additionally, little cumulative work has been accomplished on the state of research and literature on finance in higher education.

Considering the importance and apparent lack of summative literature on finance in higher education, the purpose for conducting the current review was to identify publication trends, topics, and themes in the literature base of higher education finance. Drawing upon the leading publications in the study of higher education, we sought to identify the seminal research contributions to the study of higher education finance and to delineate primary and secondary research themes within these contributions.

Research on Higher Education Finance

A number of studies during the past two decades have addressed the need to examine specific components of the formulas, processes, and management tactics of higher education finance. These studies have ranged from ratio-analyses (Chabotar, 1989) and economic impact studies (cite Carpenter in Texas) to sweeping profiles of international approaches to financing higher education (such as Tilak & Varghese, 1991). The subject has similarly been noted for its importance by faculty (Stadtman, 1980) and the popular media (Paulsen, 1991).

The results of much of the existing finance-related research is site-specific and exploratory, with a few exceptions directed

at modelling systems and formulas (Leslie & Ramey, 1986). Additionally, the literature is replete with case studies and individual practice reports of specific strategies. One of the results of this rather limited body of scholarly attention to finance is the lack of a basic text for use in the preparation or enhancement of those seeking administrative positions in the academy. This lack of consensus on readings was evidenced in Miller and Nelson's (1994) identification of reading materials perceived to be basic in the study of higher education. Further, of those participating in the Miller and Nelson study, there was no consensus of basic readings related to finance in higher education other than the Ginn Press ASHE Reader on Higher Education Finance which includes a compilation of individual articles.

This apparent lack of synthesis in the higher education community concerning finance provided the impetus to consider the current trends and issues being addressed, and the research methodologies used to create this foundation upon which practitioners are being prepared. There also exists a real need to operationalize much of the work which has already been accomplished and to integrate these findings in a more holistic manner into the higher education program curriculum.

Procedures

Due to the exploratory purpose for conducting the study, the body of literature related to the study of higher education finance were examined. To guide in the collection of readings on higher education finance, the seven leading periodicals in the study of higher education were studied, including: Educational Research Quarterly, Higher Education, the Journal of Higher Education, Planning and Changing, Planning for Higher Education, Research in Higher Education, and the Review of Higher Education. As a word of caution, Planning for Higher Education was the only non-referred publication included, and Higher Education was the only internationally published journal included in the study.

All volumes printed between 1982 and 1993 were studied. The years of publication were assumed to be reflective of the longitudinal trends in higher education finance. The financial constraints present in the 1980s was assumed to be a driving force in the development and presentation of research related to financing higher education. Additionally, the late-1970s were identified as the turning point for higher education finance where financial resources became increasingly scarce (Quay & Olevnik, 1984).

The review of the articles printed focused on four primary areas: who wrote the article, what type of article was it, what was the topic, and what were the significant findings presented in the article.

Results

A total of 98 articles were published in the seven periodicals identified, including 35 in Higher Education, 24 in Planning for Higher Education, 17 in the Journal of Higher Education, 10 in Research in Higher Education, nine in the Review of Higher Education, two in Planning and Changing, and one in Educational Research Quarterly. These articles were published in varying quantities during the twelve years of study, with 1991 providing the publication of 16 articles. Other years with more than ten articles printed were 1989 (15 publications) and 1985 (11 publications). Conversely, three articles were published in 1990 and 1993, and four were published in 1982 (see Table 1).

Trends and Practices

Faculty authors accounted for just over half (51%) of all the articles. The category of "other," inclusive of business and industry representatives, state agency officials, and governmental agents, was the classification for 23% of the authors, and 18% of the authors were higher education "practitioners." The remaining 7% of the publications were written by authors with no identifying information provided.

The vast majority of the articles published were practice reports (81%). These reports indicated the results, processes, and systems used to obtain additional institutional or system revenues, money management strategies, etc. The remaining 19% of the articles provided a presentation of scholarly research. Of

the articles dealing with res earch findings, 79% employed primarily quantitative data a nalysis methods, and 21% employed primarily qualitative methods .

Issues and Topics

The topics covered by th e articles studied fell into seven categories. The largest numb er of articles (32%) dealt with international reports of fina ncing higher education in particular countries, a topic of special interest in Higher Education. Articles dealing with institu tional financial planning comprised 22% of the total, followed by tuition costs (15%), funding sources (12%), philosophy and history of finance in higher education (10%), facilities (4%), and policy related to higher education finance (4%).

Of the 19 research-based publications, 11 dealt with student issues, either related to fac ulty, institutional effectiveness, or tuition. The remaining ar ticles were scattered among various topics, such as state policie s for funding higher education (n=3), faculty teaching and r esearch (n=2), and institutional effectiveness or quality meas ures.

Discussion

The current study was conducted to identify trends and issues of importance in the literature of higher education finance. To accomplish this task, a somewhat subjective listing of the "leading" publications in higher education finance were

identified and studied for the period of 1982 through 1993. The results indicated both thematic and chronological trends in literature.

The chronological trends presented by the literature revealed a somewhat consistent attention to finance throughout the 1980s. While the number of publications related to finance was "high" on only three ocassions (1985, 1989, and 1991) where more than ten articles appeared, there were also only three instances where fewer than five articles were published (1982, 1990, and 1993). No cyclical patterns were identified based on the years of study, however, the literature does consistently demonstrate moderate support for the concept of finance.

Thematic trends for the entire literature base appeared to be consistent with the broad spectrum of all that encompasses "higher education finance." Rather disappointing, however, was the lack of innovative and creative testing of models and theories on the reconstruction of financing higher education. Additionally, alternative methods of revenue generation were largely ignored, and indicated a reactive approach to problem identification and study. The practice reports, common throughout the literature base, revealed a willingness by non-faculty to publish on the topic and share experiences, yet little effort was displayed at generalizing these experiences to other institutions or internationally.

Higher Education presented a refreshing view of financial control and management with the special issue on international finance of higher education. Much more could have been done within the spectrum of the issue, either by modelling or synthesis.

The research base identified presented an apparent perpetuation of current topics and methods. Few qualitative efforts were employed, and no student authors were identified. The lack of preparing a future generation of scholars to deal with the increasingly dynamic area of finance may be perhaps the most disturbing of all findings.

The mandate to aggressively pursue an agenda for higher education finance, both as a field of study and in practice, has not been made by professional associations or individual scholars. The continued reliance on the "tried and true" must at some point give way to innovative and creative thinking about more than funding formula's and student tuition payment methods. For higher education to be as successful as it has during the past century, fundamental and progressive thinking must guide the design and implementation of research which encompasses a holistic view of the higher education community. This valuable research, however, must be shared across state and national boundaries and be the subject to constructive dialogue among practitioners and scholars alike.

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Table 1.

Chronological Listing of Publications by Journal

	Articles Published by Year											
Journal	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93
Ed Res Quart	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Higher Edu	1	1	0	2	1	4	2	2	2	10	8	2
Jrnl of Hi Ed	0	2	3	4	1	1	3	2	0	1	0	0
Res in Hi Ed	1	2	1	1	1	2	0	1	0	1	0	0
Rev of Hi Ed	0	0	0	2	3	0	0	1	0	3	0	0
Plan & Change	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Plan for Hi Ed	2	1	1	2	2	2	1	9	1	1	1	1
TOTAL	4	7	6	11	8	9	7	15	3	16	9	3